Abstract

A technique for imparting substantial break-once-run-everywhere resistance to software objects, and for controlling access and use of resulting protected objects by a client computer. Specifically, a relatively large number of identical watermarks are embedded throughout a software object to form a protected object. Once a user has downloaded a protected object through a client computer, the user transacts with a publishers web server to obtain an electronic license, cryptographically signed by the publisher to an enforcer located in the client computer which specifies rights for accessing and using this object, to this computer and an expected value of a parameter contained in the watermarks. Whenever the client computer attempts to access a file containing the protected object, the enforcer examines the object using its watermark key. If the object contains a watermark at a location specified by the watermark key, a digital rights management system executing in the client operating system accesses a license database to determine if the access is permitted by the license.